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Annex "A," Subparagraph li, Sociological Background

INTELLECTUAL AND ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

Intellectual and artistic expression is interpreted in this chapter to mean the communication of experience and ideas through the media of creative and academic writing, painting, the plastic arts, dancing, and music. 532 538

The bulk of the creative and academic writing of the Central-South Region does not differ from that produced in China as a whole. The Chinese written language is the vehicle for official business and cultivated expression in all parts of China. In the past, cities like Changsha, Hankow, Nanchang, and Canton in Central-South China closely followed the cultural interests of Shanghai and Peking, and innovations derived from leaders in Shanghai and Peking, upon receiving support from people in these Central-South cities, appear to have been accepted nationally. The identification of the bulk of the creative and academic writings of the Central-South Region with that of the Chinese nation is particularly true today when the nation is ruled by an authoritarian government and when all cultural innovations emanate from Peking.

The Chinese, especially the Chinese Communists, often speak of literature and the arts as one. In the Communists' policy statements, what pertains to literature also pertains to the other arts. Therefore, as far as the theory and policy of the arts are concerned, no separate treatment is necessary.

In less sophisticated folk literature and folk art, however, the Central-South exhibits some unique regional characteristics. But even in this respect, the Central-South Region is by no means an integrated 532 538 184

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whole: Honan is more closely related to the North China tradition, and is oriented toward Hopei rather than toward the provinces in the south; Hupeh, Hunan, and Kiangsi are oriented toward the provinces east of them rather than toward their northern and southern neighbors; Kwangtung and Kwangsi have South China characteristics not shared by other provinces in the region. Furthermore, Kwangsi and the western border of Hunan have been settled by minority groups as well as the Han Chinese. These minority groups have forms of intellectual and artistic expression unlike those of the Han Chinese.

I. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF LITERARY ACTIVITIES IN COMMUNIST CHINA

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The reform of literature and art (wen-i cheng-feng) at Yenan in 1942 [1] made the practice of literature and art in the Liberated Areas overt political activities; the application of the same line to the entire country in 1949 subjugated all writers and artists in the nation to the service of the state. Control and regimentation of thought in literature and art became more systematic as the Communists consolidated their power, the victor being the arbiter of artistic "truth." In general, the control over writers, artists, and their work takes three forms, as was true in the Liberated Areas after the 1942 reform: (1) the organization of writers and artists under government auspices; (2) the identification of the duties of writers and artists with the implementation of government policy; and (3) the intentional and unceasing use of literary and art criticism to keep writers and artists in line. Now, however, the scope is national.

1. Mao Tse-tung's speeches at the Party School in Yenan in February and at the Yenan Literary and Art Circles' meeting in May 1942 established the

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Festival in Czechoslovakia in 1951. The Concentration Camp at Shang-yao, which was made in 1951, describes the life of the "patriotic people" in the Kuomintang concentration camp and, according to the Communist reviewers, successfully "demonstrates the collective heroism" of the Communists under duress. When the rural production drive was about to begin in 1954, the movie Good Harvest was timed to be shown to the peasants during the festivities of the lunar New Year, in order to emphasize the importance of increasing the output of the land. The People on the Grassland is a movie about the Mongols in Inner Mongolia. Sound tracks in the Mongol and Uigur languages have been made so that this picture may be circulated among the ethnic minorities. 546

It should be mentioned that the Communists have elevated the social position of actors and actresses from that of "artist." Actors and actesses have their own organizations in the capital, and are invited to take part in the deliberation of new policies pertaining to their profession "under the leadership of the Party." 546 534

III. ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

A. Painting and the Plastic Arts

Painting and plastic arts are largely utilitarian in China today. The utilitarian spirit puts them either in the realm of propaganda, or craftsmanship. As propaganda, they become extremely derivative and stereotyped; as craftsmanship, they utilize local characteristics and traditional skills, although they sometimes appear to be unrestrainedly florid and pretentious. The entries for the Kwangtung Art Workers' 532

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Exhibition held in August 1954 at Canton may be taken as representative of artistic productions of the Central-South Region. The entries fell into the following broad categories: twenty Chinese brush paintings, twelve woodcuts, five oil paintings, five pencil sketches, four water colors, four pieces of sculpture, four ceramic figures. three wood-carvings, two door-pictures, two cartoons, one chalk drawing, and one poster. Among these items, the ceramic figures and wood-carvings represent the best-known craftsmanship of Kwangtung and are little influenced by Communist ideology.[21] Other art forms used Communist policies or slogans as themes for depiction. Woodcuts, sculptures, and water colors seem to have been more easily adapted to the new themes than oil paintings and the traditional Chinese brush paintings. The oil paintings lack imagination in composition; at their best, they are only photographic depictions of political activities. Traditional brush-painting technique is at its best in landscape paintings and in depicting rural life and is ill-adapted to the illustration of modern people and their activities.

No prominent artists in oil or water color have emerged under the Communist regime.

Under the general principle, "Accept the heritage of the world," artists like Rembrandt and Leonardo da Vinci are commemorated and reproductions like that of the Mona Lisa are used in literary and art journals.

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21. Ch'ao-chou is the center of the wood-carving craft and Shih-wan of the ceramic craft. The porcelain of Ching-te-cheng, Kiangsi, has been exhibited in Peking, Shanghai, and abroad.

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B. Woodcuts

The woodcut, a traditional art in China, is used 532
to adorn story books. Lu Hsün was the first to renew popular interest in this art. Woodcuts became popular in Yenan during the war against Japan because their creation does not require elaborate equipment. Many people remember the lively woodcuts of the Liberated Areas, which showed the influence of Western woodcuts. Woodcuts are popular in Communist China; there is a tendency to incorporate the traditional Chinese woodcut style in the illustration of Communist themes, and there are elaborate woodcuts in multiple colors, the technique of which antedates the Yenan period. In recent woodcuts, rural life is more effectively presented than blast furnaces or anti-U.S. activities.

C. New Year's Pictures (Nien-hua)

In those Chinese households which have not been influenced by the West, a new picture is hung or pasted on the wall on every New Year's Eve to assure a prosperous and peaceful year ahead. The pictures are called nien-hua. New Year's pictures are exploited by the Communists as a means to secure people's consent and support for their regime. The traditional theme of superstitious propitiation to gods has been transmogrified to praise of Mao Tse-tung for bringing happiness and prosperity to the people, to the celebration of the Long March of the Red Army, the distribution of the land certificates after the land reform, the woman train-conductor, or the "great meeting of Stalin and Mao Tse-tung."[22]

22. People's Pictorial, February 1951.

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The Communists have boasted of a tremendous sale of the "new" nien-hua in the last few years. The production and printing of the nienhua are now done entirely by Communist publishing houses, and the Chinese people have no way of buying their traditional nien-hua. The aesthetic value of the nien-hua is practically nil, but it utilizes so well the traditional customs, beliefs, and sayings of the people that its messages are immediately understandable and are apt to be accepted. 532

D. Comic strips (Lien-huan t'u-hua)

The Chinese comic strip is neither literature nor art, but it borrows a little from both to enable the barely literate to entertain themselves with stories. The Communists, knowing the popularity of comic strips among children, women, and the uneducated, have contrived to make them instruments to teach "patriotism," sanitation, and health. They regard earlier comic strips as "feudalistic" and superstitious, and have replaced them with those which are "new, healthy, and educational." The new comic strips, created by artists recruited and guided by the Communists, are seen at street corners and in factories, villages, armies, and schools.

The Communists claim that the sale of comic strips is increasing daily. The Lien-ho Bookstore in Shanghai, which handles the new comic strips, reports the sale of more than 600,000 volumes in January 1951, and more than one million volumes in the following April. The comic strip periodical Lien-huan Hua-pao is reported to have a circulation of 400,000 copies.

The most representative and most publicized 532
new comic strip is The Letter with a Chicken Feather, which uses 243 pictures to "give the Chinese children a patriotic education." The story concerns a young boy who, after receiving a Communist education, successfully fulfilled the "heroic" task of delivering an important message to anti-Japanese guerrilla forces It is claimed that more than 58,000 copies of The Letter with a Chicken Feather have been sold. (It was traditional practice to include a chicken feather with an urgent message to signify the letter's importance and the need for safekeeping.)

E. Dance

China proper does not have any distinctive 535
forms of dancing, although yang-ko is sometimes considered native to China. Yang-ko is a combination of singing and dancing derived from the song pattern of peasants who sing in groups antiphonically when working in the rice-fields. The dance steps revolve around a basic pattern, that is, two steps forward and one step back, which resembles the movement of the peasants as they work in the fields. In village festivals yang-ko is sometimes performed, but it became truly popular only after the reform of literature and art in 1942, when the Communists used the dance to propagate new ideas in Shensi and in North China. It was brought to different parts of China in time to greet the advancing People's Liberation Army. The opera The White-haired Girl was based on the singing and dancing forms of the yang-ko; and at the first stage of land reform this opera was utilized by the Communist

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Yellow paper, called Huang Piao, which is not the same paper used in presenting petitions. 782

Any kind of food, cooked or uncooked, chickens, goats, pigs and oxen, but not, so far as I know, water-buffalos or horses. Animals are not offered in Buddhist temples. I do not know of any instance in Anking where the offering was cooked or burnt before the altar. Wine and tea are also offered, and sometimes the blood of the sacrificed animals.

Wooden placques bearing complimentary inscriptions, called Pien or Pien Eh. Sometimes the inscriptions have four characters, sometimes the one word Ling, or efficiency. The latter are thank offerings for answered prayer, the former are gifts to the god by persons of distinction.

Pairs of scrolls called Tui Tzi, or opposites, each containing the same number of characters, each character balancing the one in the same position on the other scroll. Sometimes these inscriptions are written on the columns of the hall, or on opposite sides of the altar.

A rich man who wishes to acquire merit may present sacrificial vessels, streamers with texts written on them, ornamental lamps or any temple fixture. He may redecorate the hall or even erect a new building with an endowment provided.

There are a number of things which might be mistaken for offerings. A box is usually found beside the altar into which worshippers drop money. This is not offered to the god, however, but is a payment to the priests for incense or for striking gongs and other services. Worshippers sometimes place a piece of straw upon the altar to remind the god of their prayer, but it is not a gift. I would class firecrackers with music as an observance in honor of the god but not an offering in the strict sense. The monks post on the walls the lists of benefactors, schedules of services and tables showing the cost of various masses and other ceremonies. They also give religious names to children on request, write these on red paper, and paste them on the columns. This last is mainly a Buddhist practice. 774 788 563

There does not seem to be anything which could be called a work of art in the Anking temples, though there may be manuscripts and pictures 778 532

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not on exhibition. This poverty is largely due to the T'aip'ings. However, there are in places stone tablets carved with inscriptions which are of some value historically. They are usually placed against the walls of the courtyards.

An interesting question which I have never seen discussed is the relation of the theater to religion in China. Four temples in Anking, those of the Tung Yo, the Fire God and the Fu and Hsien City-Gods, have stages over the entrance, facing the main hall across a courtyard. Plays were formerly given there at the New Year and the birthday of the god, but the custom seems to have died out or been forbidden by the officials because of the disorder it created. These plays were not religious, though gods sometimes appeared among the dramatis personae. I do not believe that there are any extant plays with a religious purpose. The ordinary explanation is that the plays were given in honor of the god, that he might enjoy them as any spectator would, and be amused, but this is superficial, of course. How did these plays come to be connected with religion, not only in the temples, but in the trade and provincial gilds? Why do some temples have them and others not? Why is a theatrical performance part of the harvest festival in the country, and why are prayers offered before the play? Such questions will probably await a closer study of the T'ang, Sung and Yuen Dynasties, when so many new ideas were introduced into China.

The images of the better known gods may be identified in various ways, which I will try to describe in considering them individually. They differ in posture, dress, sex, facial expression, color, the implements they bear, their position in the temple, their attendants, occupation, and in other ways. Some would be hard to make sure of if taken from their temples. However, in all but Buddhist temples, and sometimes even there, the gods have their names written on tablets, much like those in ancestral halls, which are placed before their images. Occasionally pictures take the place of images on the altar. I have never seen the image of an animal in a Chinese temple, though the Chinese have "Fox Temples", and a few images have animal faces, and I understand that temples in the province of Kuantung have animal images.

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Beside One of the Hells.

The Horse Face Servant and a Secretary.

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